1	2	3	4	5
15	Rajasthan	Chambal	1.36	0.77
16	Sikkim	Rani Chu	15.81	8.13
17	Tamil Nadu	Cauvery, Adyar, Cooum, Vennar, Vaigai and Tamrabarani	868.64	734.24
18	Uttar Pradesh	Ganga, Yamuna and Gomti	887.68	472.26
19	Uttranchal	Ganga	70.62	16.63
20	West Bengal	Ganga, Damodar and Mahananda	297.37	155.40

Reducing high level of mercury containment

484. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that high levels of mercury is found in the air and most particularly in hospitals which threatens the health of patients and medical staff;

(b) whether it is also a fact that USA has come forward to help our country to reduce such high levels of mercury containment; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 and the subsequent amendments thereof, do not prescribe any emission limits for mercury from bio-medical waste incinerators. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for various areas including sensitive areas like hospitals, also do not cover mercury.

Improper handling and accidental breakage of instruments containing mercury can cause pollution.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has requested all State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Poliution Control Committees (PPCs) of Union Territories that mercury spillage/losses in healthcare facilities need to be given proper attention not only in respect of collection of the spilled mercury, its storage and sending the same back to the manufacturers, but also for taking all necessary measures to ensure that the spilled waste generated from the healthcare facilities is taken care for its proper disposal. Further, the Schedule-II of Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2003 provide that any waste containing equal to or greater than 50 ppm of mercury in it is a hazardous waste and the concerned generators of such waste, including healthcare facilities, are required to dispose the same as per the Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2003.

No ill effects of mercury in any Central Government Hospitals have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) and (c) The Union Government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States Environment Protection Agency (USEPA) in the year 2002 under which bilateral cooperation is going on in various environmental sectors such as Air and Water Quality Management, Management of Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes, Pollution Prevention and Control, Environmental Governance, Environmental Monitoring and Assessment etc. On 2nd April, 2007, the MoU has been extended further, by mutual consent for a further period of five years, by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and the USEPA.

Protection of river Ganga

485. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that River Ganga is among the ten rivers in the world which are going to be dried up in the nearest future;

(b) if so, the action which is proposed to be taken by Government for the protection of River Ganga and to protect the fertility of the land for proper agricultural production;

(c) whether other rivers in the country are also affected in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) In a report entitled "World's top 10 rivers at risk", the WWF, an International Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), has listed the river Ganga as one of the World's ten rivers facing risk. The Central Government is not aware of the data-base and the methodology adopted by the said NGO for making this Report. The report profiles the biodiversity of river Ganga, and perceives over extraction of water for agriculture and excessive water diversions affecting natural flows as major threats to the river. The Report does not consider other Indian rivers as facing danger of getting dried up.

The flows of river Ganga are being monitored by Central Water Commission (CWC) under the Ministry of Water Resources at various places on regular basis. The last point is Farakka Barrage after which the river enters into Bangladesh. As per the flows measured during the lean season (1st January to 31st May) at Farakka Barrage, the flows of the last five years are quite comparable with the long term flows (1949-88). There is no apparent reduction in the available water in river Ganga at this terminal point even during the critical season. The CWC pursues an approach for integrated and coordinated development of surface and groundwater resources and their conjunctive use. The CWC has formulated a National Perspective Plan for water resources development in the country that envisages inter-linking of rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins for optimum utilization of water in the country. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, various works are undertaken for pollution abatement in major rivers including Ganga through interception and diversion of sewage for its treatment and construction of Sewage